

**Top Secret** (25)

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DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

## MEMORANDUM

### *The Situation in Vietnam*

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Information as of 1600  
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HIGHLIGHTS

Heavy fighting is reported between US Marines and a Communist unit south of Da Nang.

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I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:  
Heavy fighting was reported between US Marines and a battalion-size Communist force in Quang Nam Province. Early casualty reports show 72 enemy soldiers killed (Paras. 1-2). A three-battalion search-and-destroy operation named FARRAGUT has begun in the southern portion of II Corps (Para. 3). The weekly review of South Vietnam battle statistics (Para. 4).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:  
There have been no recent significant developments concerning General Co's ouster as deputy premier and defense minister (Paras. 1-2). US Embassy officials have noted that Vietnamese resentment of the large US presence in Vietnam is increasing, but believe that this more or less inevitable trend has potentially positive as well as negative connotations (Paras. 3-7).

III. North Vietnamese Military Developments:  
There is nothing of significance to report.

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V. Communist Political Developments:

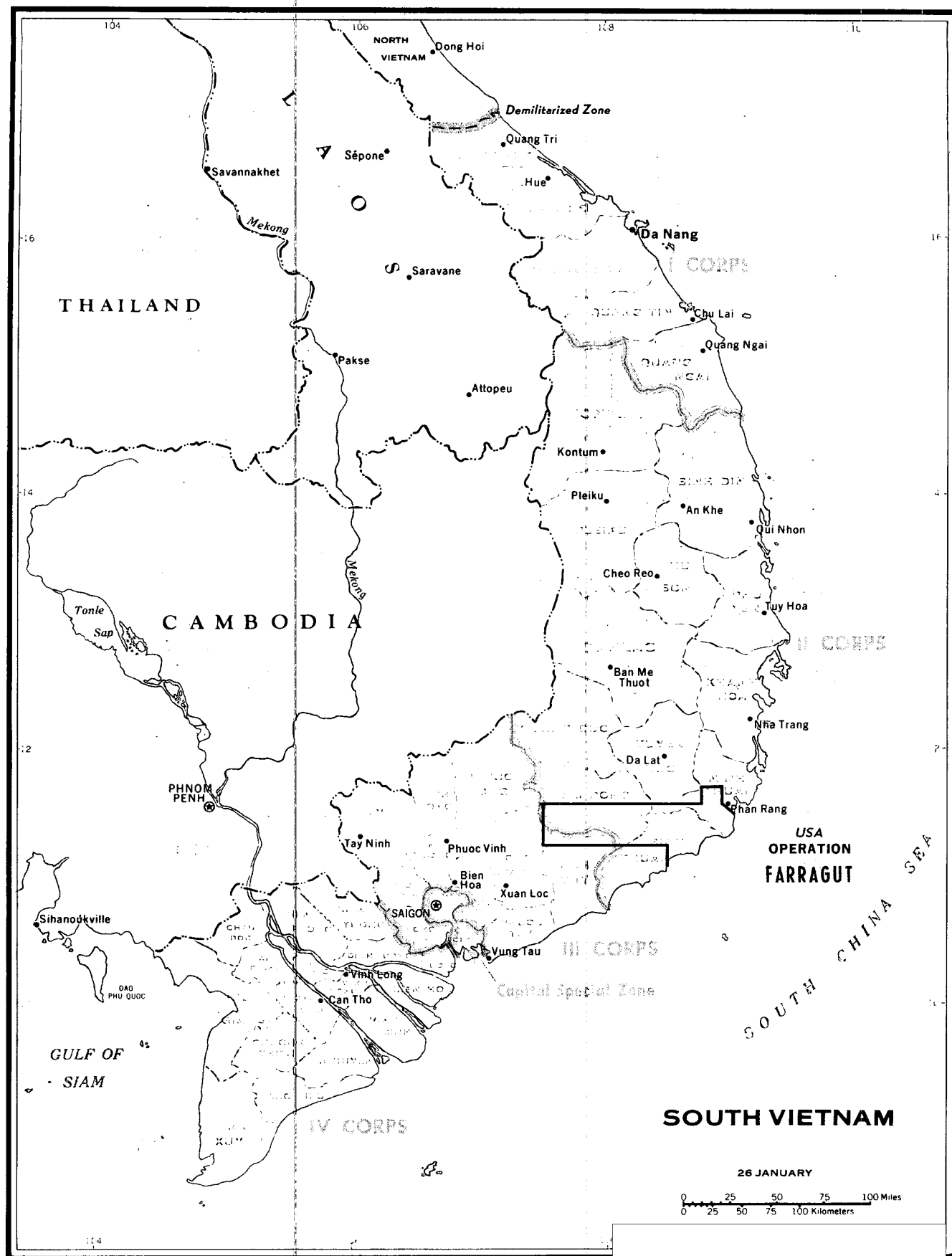
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Hanoi denies Western press stories of Chinese interference with Soviet aid shipments (Paras. 6-7).

*Note: The graphics on South Vietnam Battle Statistics will appear in the issue of 29 January.*

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Heavy fighting broke out on 26 January between US Marines and Communist troops in the rice paddies 20 miles southwest of Da Nang in Quang Nam Province. The action began when a US Marine company on a local security operation encountered a Communist force which withdrew to the southwest. A second US Marine company was helilifted to a blocking position and was later joined by a third company with armored vehicles.

2. According to preliminary reports, the enemy force, estimated at battalion size, lost 72 killed. Sixteen Americans have been reported killed and 42 wounded. US artillery, tanks, and tactical air strikes have been supporting the Marines.

3. Three battalions of the US 101st Airborne Division have begun Operation FARRAGUT in the southern portion of South Vietnam's II Corps Tactical Zone. This search-and-destroy operation is designed to last two weeks and is targeted against Viet Cong secret bases and storage sites in the area. Two Viet Cong battalions with a combined strength of 900 men are reported operating in the area of this sweep operation. No contact with the enemy has thus far been reported.

Weekly Review of South Vietnam Battle Statistics

4. The week of 15-21 January compared with 8-14 January:

I. Viet Cong Incidents

<u>Time Period</u>	<u>At-tacks</u>	<u>Regimental size</u>	<u>Battalion size</u>
8-14 Jan	42	0	1
15-21 Jan	50	0	1

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<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Company size</u>	<u>Harassment</u>	<u>Terrorism</u>
8-14 Jan	5	360	24
15-21 Jan	4	358	28

<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Sabo-tage</u>	<u>Propa-ganda</u>	<u>Anti-Aircraft</u>	<u>Total Incidents</u>
8-14 Jan	19	18	448	911
15-21 Jan	15	32	179	662

II. Casualties

	<u>VC/NVA</u>		<u>GVN</u>	
	<u>8-14 Jan</u>	<u>15-21 Jan</u>	<u>8-14 Jan</u>	<u>15-21 Jan</u>
Killed	1,176	1,683	197	340
Wounded	-----	-----	425	731
Missing/ Captured	<u>213</u>	<u>311</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>63</u>
TOTALS	1,389	1,994	667	1,134

	<u>US</u>		<u>FREE WORLD</u>	
	<u>8-14 Jan</u>	<u>15-21 Jan</u>	<u>8-14 Jan</u>	<u>15-21 Jan</u>
Killed	117	121	32	11
Wounded	920	715	64	12
Missing/ Captured	<u>7</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTALS	1,044	841	96	23

III. Weapons Captured

	<u>VC/NVA</u>		<u>GVN</u>	
	<u>8-14 Jan</u>	<u>15-21 Jan</u>	<u>8-14 Jan</u>	<u>15-21 Jan</u>
Individual	552	Not	203	302
Crew-Served	<u>25</u>	Reported	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
TOTALS	577		204	303

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. There have been no significant developments concerning the dismissal of General Co during the past day or so. Premier Ky returned to Saigon on 26 January from his tour of Australia and New Zealand, but dodged questions concerning Co's status. He did indicate, however, that an official announcement might be forthcoming soon, perhaps on 27 January.

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Vietnamese Attitudes Toward the American Presence

3. In a recent assessment of Vietnamese attitudes toward the US presence in South Vietnam, the US Embassy notes a steady and significant growth during the past few months of Vietnamese efforts to reassert their nationalism vis-a-vis US influence. Embassy officials believe that this trend is of significant proportions, and expect Vietnamese criticism of some aspects of the American presence to continue to grow as national elections, scheduled later this year, draw nearer. Such criticisms, however, will probably be balanced by expressions of appreciation for US assistance. Although this increasing Vietnamese assertiveness is complicating daily US-GVN coordination efforts, US officials also point out that this attitude could have a constructive effect in the long run if it develops as a unifying force in the Vietnamese political framework.

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4. In general, Vietnamese resentment extends to all foreign elements in Vietnam, including Koreans, Filipinos, and the French. Americans, because of their far greater numbers, receive the brunt of it. Such resentment is keener in the cities, where the population is perhaps more exposed to off-duty personnel and less aware of the more positive aspects of the US presence such as increased security and civic action in some rural areas. The attitude of the urban population is also shaped to a considerable degree by teachers, students, journalists, and politicians, many of whom tend to be hypercritical of the US presence.

5. Underlying factors contributing to this attitude are the presence of many Americans, their higher living standards, their seemingly privileged status in Vietnam, and their lack of understanding of Vietnam and the Vietnamese. Vietnamese also fear that their traditional social and cultural values are being eroded by the US presence, and that even Vietnamese sovereignty is in danger. They suspect that major policy decisions are made in Washington and imposed on the GVN, which has in part led to a misunderstanding of such policies as the new pacification role for ARVN. Although US aid has generally been appreciated, there is some criticism that it has not enhanced Vietnam's long-term economic viability.

6. It is doubtful that criticism and resentment of the US presence could become ugly or violent anti-Americanism without the deliberate efforts and guidance of a well-disciplined political organization. Thus far, political trends do not suggest that such a development is in the offing. Nearly all non-Communist political groups appear to display at least a measure of this resentment, although none so far appears to consider it the paramount political issue. A reflection of such attitudes even among members of the present government, both civilian

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and military, is evident in stiffer demands recently being raised in various issues under negotiation with US officials. The US Embassy has detected a prevalent feeling among Vietnamese that the US prefers to work with a military regime and is not anxious to see a return to civilian rule in Vietnam. The necessarily close cooperation between the US and the Ky government over the past 19 months has largely given rise to this belief, and to the belief that American officials support Premier Ky personally because of their close coordination with him.

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III. NORTH VIETNAMESE MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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Hanoi Denies China Interferes With Soviet Aid

6. Hanoi has condemned as "odious slander" the latest of a series of stories in the Western press alleging Chinese interference with Soviet assistance transiting China en route to the DRV. In an article in the party daily Nhan Dan on 26 January, Hanoi charged that recent press stories claiming that China had hijacked missiles en route to the DRV from the Soviet Union were part of a "cowardly and wicked scheme on the part of the imperialists." The article referred to this and other similar stories as part of an effort by the US to cause difficulties to the Vietnamese people's fight against the US by sowing division between the Vietnamese and the people "of brotherly socialist countries." It denied that any such division was possible.

7. Nhan Dan praised the "unreserved support and heartfelt assistance" of the USSR, China, and the other socialist countries and expressed gratitude for this valuable assistance. Hanoi's effort to counter these charges reflects the regime's sensitivity to anything which tends to complicate its delicate balancing act between Peking and Moscow.

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